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EFFECT OF ARMY TRAINING CORPS ON THE COLLEGES

Even in normal times the factors which determine college attendance are so complex that it is difficult to know just where we stand and what progress we have made in any given year. But this situation has been greatly complicated by the war; many familiar landmarks have been completely effaced and we are compelled to feel our way cautiously by the questionnaire method. The results of a recent inquiry on the Student Army Training Corps units are offered here to enable us to orient ourselves to some general tendencies of higher education.

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ATTENDANCE

Unquestionably the training corps units have been a powerful factor, not only in maintaining the attendance of last year, but in bringing the colleges to a higher level than was anticipated. Some of the striking features of this change are noted below:

1. The number of regular students of college grade only in state institutions as indicated by returns from 75 universities and colleges has increased 10 per cent.

2. The number of regular students of college grade only in private institutions as indicated by returns from 125 colleges has increased 12 per cent.

3. These increases are primarily in the attendance of men. Twenty-six institutions **for men only** show an average increase of 23 per cent. Twelve institutions **for women only** report moderate gains on the average, but not enough to affect general returns. The attendance of women both in state and private coeducational institutions has fallen off 6 per cent as compared with last year.

It is evident from this brief statement that the advantages of the army training units for students have been fairly well distributed among public and private institutions. In view of the special inducement held out to men, it is not surprising that the attendance of women decreased, excepting in their own institutions which could provide them with special training for the war. One needs only to examine the reports of schools which did not apply for the army units to be convinced of the extent to which this movement was a factor in maintaining the colleges. Some institutions without this were almost stripped of college men and on the other hand a few of the institutions having the SATC, which under the tendency prevailing last year would have found it practically impossible to continue, are now able to go on with fair attendance.

A closer examination of the figures on which these conclusions are based throws additional light on the situation of particular types of institutions. Within the field of education under state control it appears that the universities experienced the same general changes as the technical and agricultural schools. Each group lost in its attendance of women and gained in attendance of men. This increase was substantially the same in both.

Among private institutions by far the largest gains were made by colleges under denominational control, 80 of these reporting an average gain of 18 per cent over last year, notwithstanding the fact that the enrollment of women was less than before. Many of the independent institutions under private control suffered an actual loss in attendance, both of men and women. This was true especially in the East and applies also to some of the larger colleges for women in that section of the country.

Thus far we have referred only to this army of students in terms of college attendance relative to last year. As a matter of fact, the actual number of men now enrolled constitutes no small military organization from the standpoint of numbers. Not all regular college men enrolled are regarded as members of the army unit, but 180 institutions, or approximately one-third of the schools of college grade in the country, have an aggregate of 62,000. Obviously, this number is changing under the plans providing for frequent transfer of men, but it includes only those who have an educational status, as men of college grade. Large groups of students, also, are training in aviation, engineering, military stores, and many specialized forms of army service at our various universities, so that we may safely place the estimate of SATC men on the college campus in excess of 150,000.

PROGRESS OF COLLEGE ENROLLMENT SINCE 1913

As the last published figures of the Bureau of Education covering attendance at private institutions were for the year 1914-15 and in state universities for 1916-17, a brief statement in tabular form on the progress of college and university attendance through the succeeding years may have some significance, although it necessarily includes some estimates which can only be approximately correct.

Attendance College Grade Only

(Excluding summer session)

	Public (Excluding Normal)	Private
1913-14	83,394 57,354 men 26,040 women	120,005 73,134 men 46,871 women
1914-15	91,541 (95 inst.) 62,384 men 29,157 women	130,058 (468 inst.) 79,452 men 50,606 women
1915-16		
1916-17	105,776 (90 inst.) 70,278 men 35,498 women	138,000 (468 inst.) 84,500 men 53,500 women (Avg. incr. since 1910)
1917-18	89,500 (90 inst.) 53,000 men 36,500 women (13.6% loss—50 inst. rpt.)	114,000 (468 inst.) 59,000 men 55,000 women (17% loss—230 inst. rpt.)
1918-19	98,400 (90 inst.) 63,400 men 35,000 women (Incr. 10%—73 inst. rep.)	132,000 (468 inst.) 79,000 men 53,000 women (12% gain—125 inst. rpt.)

It is obvious from the table above that practically all the initial losses in 1917-18, due to the war, were in the attendance of men and that similarly the gains of the present year largely recoup these losses. Attendance of college women has not varied over 5 per cent in the last five years. A second fact which is both significant and encouraging is brought out by a comparison of the present year with 1914-15. There is every indication that in spite of the war the numerical strength of higher education is slightly greater today than it was four years ago.

Not only do the reasonable estimates for this year show this to be so, but the actual reports of 180 representative institutions for the respective years verify this conclusion. This testifies strongly to the inherent vigor of our educational system in adapting itself to the greatest social crisis of the century. It gives us confidence, also, now that the war is practically over in facing the delicate problems of reconstruction. Thus far, colleges have held their own financially and the estimates reported to date of tuition receipts for the present year total \$1,090,000, as against \$960,000 for the preceding year, or an increase of 10 per cent. No one can foresee even immediate developments with reference to the Student Army Training Corps movement, or the attitude of the government in continuing this support now that the war is over. It is important, however, for the educational forces to be awake and conscious of the relative strength of their present position so that vigorous and united action may be taken in handling wisely the interests of higher education after the war.